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RESEARCH ARTICLE**BETWEEN RESISTANCE AND RESILIENCE****How Do Italian Solidarity Purchase Groups Change in Times of Crisis and Austerity?*****Riccardo Guidi***University of Pisa***Massimiliano Andretta***University of Pisa*

ABSTRACT: This Paper deals with the current transformations of Solidarity Purchase Groups (SPGs) in Italy. We particularly wonder if and eventually how the economic crisis and austerity policies have affected SPGs. Through an approach based on the literature on political consumerism and social movements, six hypotheses are proposed: 'less economic resources, less SPGs,' 'cultural path dependency,' 'increased opportunities,' 'isomorphism,' 'civic traditions,' and 'resilience.' Empirical data focus on Italian and Tuscan SPGs, by both articulating different research methods and focalizing on different levels. Although our work has only an explorative aim, our analysis shows that the amount of available economic resources cannot *per se* lead to a satisfying understanding of the evolution of SPGs. Hypotheses based on culture and politi-

* The article originates from a strong and ongoing collaboration between the authors. However, as some assessment processes require formal attribution, we would like to specify that Riccardo Guidi is responsible for parts 1, 2 and 3, while Massimiliano Andretta is responsible for part 4. Part 5 is co-authored. The authors would like to thank Chiara Ceragioli, Costanza dell'Omodarme and Matteo Landi for their support in data collection, Ada Rossi for the helpful exchange of ideas and discussions on Tuscan SPGs, Francesca Forno and two anonymous referees for their excellent comments on the previous drafts of the article.

cal processes seem to be more promising and can point to the resilience capacity of those groups. Post-materialistic values resulting from economic well-being might have produced organized practices of political consumerism. However, once political consumerism gets structured—this is our tentative argument—not only does it resist to external shocks but also it transforms itself and adapts to the new conditions imposed by crises, that is, it becomes ‘resilient.’ The ‘resilience hypothesis’ applied to SPGs nevertheless has to face some social cleavages.

KEYWORDS: Crisis/Austerity, Italy, Political Consumerism, Resilience, Solidarity Purchase Group

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1. Introduction

This Paper examines the current transformations of Italian Solidarity Purchase Groups (SPGs). We particularly wonder if and eventually how the economic crisis and austerity policies have affected SPGs, including the indirect reactions of SPGs to the new social and political contexts shaped by crisis and austerity.

SPGs are among the most organized, widespread and popular political consumerism practices in Italy. They especially act on the ‘positive’ side of political consumerism (Micheletti 2003) and can be typically considered alternative consumerism Sustainable Community Movement Organizations (Forno, Graziano 2014). Although the crucial features of Italian SPGs are already known, how they are changing under the pressure of crisis and austerity is still to be in-depth investigated.

This issue has a robust theoretical background as well as clear implications for current debates on political consumerism. Political consumerism is a historical phenomenon shaped by its context and has been used within very different settings and meanings along with different mobilizations (Micheletti 2003, 37-72). Scholars have mainly framed contemporary global political consumerism into post-materialist hypotheses (Inglehart 1990), considering it as a function of the opulent society where citizens need to cope with materialist concerns only to some extent, and prioritize goals as environmental protection, self-expression, quality of life, gender equality, etc. However, the recent economic crisis and the consequent austerity policies should lead us to reconsider such pattern. Contrary to what one might expect when following post-materialist hypotheses, ‘positive’ political consumerism practices have significantly grown under the pressure of hardship in all those Southern European countries where the impact of 2008 crisis and austerity is being particularly severe (Kousis, Giugni forthcoming). The adverse context and circumstances seem to give a further impetus to the diffusion of these experiences to such an extent that Castells et. al (2012) have identified the alter-

native economic sector as one of the four emerging layers of the economies of both the European Union and the United States after 2008.

In the following pages we investigate to what extent and in what ways materialist concerns are transforming the critical consumerist's meanings and practices as well as the features of political consumerist movements. We particularly focus on Italian and Tuscan SPGs, by articulating different research methods and focalizing on different levels. The first section addresses some pivotal questions on political consumerism in times of crisis and austerity, while in the second section we offer some evidence on Italian SPGs and the methods we used to deepen our analysis on a regional scale. The third section finally presents the research findings about SPGs in Tuscany (one of the Italian regions where SPGs are more numerous) by relying on both qualitative and quantitative data produced by structured and semi-structured interviews, a focus-group, and notes from participant observation. Although our regional investigation has been thorough, the small sample, the wide heterogeneity of SPGs, and the complexity of our questions suggest that all our analyses must be still considered explorative and our results only provisional.

2. Organized Political Consumerism in Times of Crisis

As the most authoritative literature in the field points out, political consumerism has a long history and has been practiced within different mobilizations in diverse times and spaces. Political consumerism of the late 1990s and early 2000s has mainly established itself in the most economically and culturally developed areas of Europe and North America as a reaction to the marketization and globalization of society (Micheletti 2003; Stolle, Hooghe, Micheletti 2005; Leonini, Sassatelli 2008). It has spread coherently with the societal shift towards post-materialistic values and post-modern reflective modernity (Inglehart 1990; Giddens 1991; Beck, Giddens, Lash 1994) and along with the paths of the sub-politicization of contemporary societies (Beck 1994). Its growth in these times and spaces has significantly happened in correspondence with the increasing weakness of traditional organizations and institutions which threw social and political mobilization and social life into first modernity (Beck 2000; van Deth, Maloney 2012). The peculiar effectiveness of this political consumerism, as Micheletti (2003, 24-34) clearly showed, has been to allow an "individualized collective action" of critical consumer(s) into the market arena.

This justified accent on the importance of individualization and consumption with regards to political consumerism has sometimes overshadowed the role of organiza-

tions as well as of market and political institutions in shaping political consumerism (Holzer 2006, 2010; Guidi 2011). Either by taking for granted the individualism of market and consumption practices or by trying to problematize it, most recent studies on the topic have privileged a micro-analysis perspective (Micheletti 2003; Stolle, Hooghe, Micheletti 2005; Andretta 2006; Ferrer-Fons 2006; Forno, Ceccarini 2006; Ferrer-Fons, Fraile 2014), while the meso-level analysis has remained relatively marginal (Sassatelli 2006; Balsinger, 2010; Graziano, Forno 2012; Grasseni 2013; Forno, Graziano, 2014). Investigating the changes of political consumerism through the lens of organizations and institutions can be a profitable way to avoid the risks of a reductionist and individual-based approach.

Following Forno, Graziano (2014), in the first place we argue that political consumerism is actually supported by groups sharing several traits with ‘classic’ social movement organizations (SMOs), while presenting some novelties which have been overlooked until now; in the second place we accept their suggestion to call them “Sustainable Community Movement Organizations” (SCMOs). While traditional SMOs have been studied especially by looking at their relations with political institutions and actors (Kriesi et al. 1995; Tarrow 1995; della Porta, Diani 2006), SCMOs need to be analyzed by paying attention to the interaction between market, politics, and culture (Hassanein 2003; Renting, Schermer, Rossi 2012). The combination of these three spheres produces a variety of meanings attached to consumerist practices.

In the cultural sphere, SCMOs promote alternative lifestyles and values. Similarly to other contemporary SMOs (such as women movements), SCMOs bring a private side of ordinary life into the public sphere; but contrary to many contemporary SMOs calling for a change in lifestyles (such as many SMOs in the 1960s/1970s), SCMOs’ alter/anti-consumerism attitude neither force people to live a radically different life, nor need a strong and systematic ideology on how the world works. In a typically post-modern way, SCMOs generally manage to balance the call for change in people consumption styles and an accessible membership. Coherently, their organizational pattern is generally “loosely coupled” (Klandermans 1989; Weick 1995).

In the market sphere, SCMOs act similarly to mutual and cooperative movements and differently from many past and present anti-capitalist movements. They try to alter the conventions of contemporary market acting on the both side of consumption and production and re-embedding economy in society (Polanyi 1944; Callon, Muniesa 2005). The action repertoire of SCMO in the market sphere is plural and flexible. However, they typically prefer using bottom-up and social entrepreneurship strategies, such as encouraging ongoing and direct relationships, mutual solidarity, and coproduction between producers and consumers (Forno, Graziano 2014; Grasseni 2014).

In the political sphere, the activity of SCMOs influences individuals, and economic and political actors. At micro level they help their members/activists to increase their social capital and to develop a new civic awareness and democratic competences (Forno, Grasseni, Signori 2013). Structural changes driven by SCMOs protest should not be underestimated. SCMOs are often considered being less conflict-oriented than other SMOs. We alternatively argue that SCMOs represent the conflict in a way that is coherent to their main sphere of action, namely market economy. Similarly to the two sides of political consumerism (Micheletti, 2003, 80), SCMOs seem to be characterized by a flexible and wide protest grammar including both 'negative' and 'positive' patterns. On the 'negative' side, SCMOs collectively model and organize individual preferences against capitalist economy actors or conventional consumption and lifestyles (such as high meat consumption or systematic use of private cars). They try to remove market shares and consensus to capitalist economy actors and avoid some of the most harmful consumption styles in current societies both through highly visible initiatives and through encouraging everyday negative preferences for ethical reasons. On the 'positive' side, SCMOs collectively model individual preferences and organize alternative networks of consumers/producers and consumers/consumers in order to satisfy socially-responsible individual preferences. They act as entrepreneurs who resolve the well-known problem of unavailable preferences in the market (Dobb 1940; Lunghini, Ranchetti 2014) but, contrary to a conventional economic actor, they operate a Polanyian "countermovement" (Polanyi 1944). The political action of SCMOs within the market arena can be particularly effective because they can threaten conventional economic players through public argumentations and demonstrations (the "voice" option) and by exploiting the organized alter/anti-consumers economic power in a free market context (the "exit" option) (Hirschman, 1970; Guidi 2011, 91-96).

Moreover, the political activities of SCMOs often include the mobilization against environmental, economic, and urban policies at global and local level, together with environmental organizations, grassroots associations, and trade unions. More recently, some SCMOs sometimes seem to be also intensively involved in supporting new political parties in national elections (such as the Five Star Movement in Italy) and, at local level, they sometimes actively participate in civic lists.

SPGs are among the most widespread and popular local alternative consumerism SCMOs in Italy. They are small, autonomous and spontaneous groups of people aimed at critically reflecting on their own consumption processes (cultural aim) and collectively purchasing everyday use products respecting social and environment-based criteria (material aim) (Retegas 1999). They mainly purchase local, fair trade, organic, seasonal,

typical, unpackaged, labor-intensive products directly from producers without any intermediation.

SPGs are based on the typical pillar of political consumerism according to which consumers in capitalist markets can affect producers' behaviors and trigger transformations in economy through their consumption choices (Micheletti 2003), but they have a different pattern of action compared to the "politics in the supermarket" one (Stolle, Hooghe, Micheletti 2005). Scholarly research has pointed out that the proximity long-lasting aggregation between citizens/consumers and the strong relationships between them and producers/providers is the key feature for SPGs. SPGs produce significant social ties through which consumption/production/co-production choices become more coordinated and reflective (Rossi, Brunori 2013; Grasseni, 2014). They also allow consumers and producers to access "food socio-technical environment", challenge their own identities and values about economy and well-being, develop civic awareness and participatory competencies (Brunori, Rossi, Malandrini 2011; Forno, Grasseni, Signori 2013). Such collective dimension makes alternative agro-food networks more effective in material terms because it allows marginal producers to be paid more than in conventional long chains of market economy, and consumers to access these products at more reasonable prices.¹ Innovation processes in local food co-production supported by SPGs seem to be the foundation of a new food citizenship (Brunori, Rossi, Malandrini 2011; Rossi, Brunori 2013).

Whereas SPGs fundamental features are already known, less attention has been given to their transformations after 2008 economic crisis so far. Since SPGs directly mobilize in the field of economy, and 2008 crisis and austerity have had a big social and economic impact on life conditions of both citizens/consumers and small producers, questioning how they are changing in this context seems to be crucial. Nevertheless, to hypothesize how crisis and austerity affect Italian SPGs is anything but easy.

Drawing from the post-materialist theory (Inglehart 1990), two hypotheses could be generated. One assumes that SPGs are more widespread in areas and groups with the highest income and level of education, and that economically weak contexts are unfavorable for the activities and the diffusion of SPGs. Given that materialist concerns have recently taken center stage and the socio-economic situation of the highly-skilled middle class has significantly worsened in Italy due to rising unemployment and under-

¹ Tuscan SPGs have confirmed and further developed this cognitive framework (ARSIA 2010, 16-17). SPG is considered a bottom-up collective instrument to contrast corporations and build a more human economy. It allows critical consumers to find good, local ethical products and organic small producers to find a sustainable sales channel for their own products. The small scale of SPGs is expected to make purchasing easier and members relationships more intense.

employment, decreasing buying power, and increase of caring responsibilities, the number of SPGs and their activities should have decreased in the last years. This trend could also be coherent with some assumptions flowing from the so-called 'resources mobilization theory' (McCarthy, Zald 1977): since middle-class political consumers have less economic resources to organize themselves through critical purchase, they do it less and SPGs decrease ('less economic resources, less SPGs' hypothesis).

The second hypothesis, once more post-materialist in its orientation, could be named 'cultural path dependency hypothesis'. The post-materialist theory has a clear socio-cultural background and we know that cultures and routines are generally resistant to change (Douglas 1986). So it could be guessed that the economic crisis has not significantly affected the post-materialist values of our societies; the strength of alternative consumerism culture is unaltered and SPGs follow their own path independently from crisis and austerity.

However, it is particularly hard to predict the indirect influences of 2008 crisis and austerity on SPGs. Connecting political processes theory (Tilly 1978; McAdam 1999) to SPGs, one could expect economic hardship and retrenchment in public expenditure created positive opportunities for socio-economic experimentations as a reaction to the failures of capitalism ('increased opportunities hypothesis'). But 2008 crisis and austerity could also lead SPGs modes to resemble conventional economy and give opportunities to 'colonize' SPGs to the winners that emerged from the maelstrom (Powell, DiMaggio 1983; Habermas 1987) ('isomorphism hypothesis'). Beyond crisis and austerity, the importance of further socio-political features should not be underestimated. Following Putnam's hypothesis on social capital (Putnam 1993), one could, for example, suppose that SPGs are more widespread in regions with the strongest civic traditions and that the destiny of SPGs mainly depends on the changes of these ('civic traditions hypothesis').

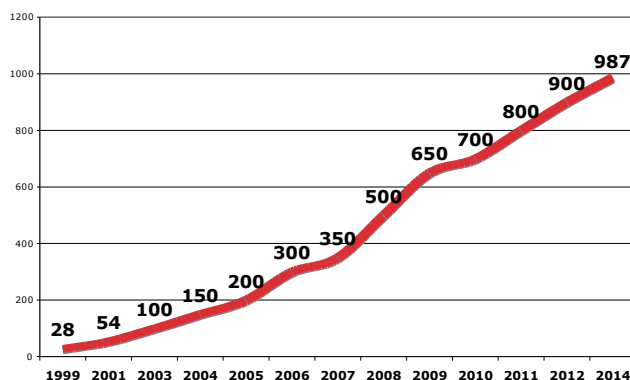
Finally, SPGs could facilitate alternative resilience processes ('resilience hypothesis'). Since community resilience has been mainly connected to an idea of adaptation after a stressful situation (Norris et al. 2008), in current adverse contexts SPGs could have a leading role within community food networks (Renting, Schermer, Rossi 2012) through which an impoverished middle-class and marginal producers of organic food support each other, and local economy is pushed towards an ecological conversion and a spatial reallocation. However, one could expect the efficacy of SPGs in terms of alternative resilience to be real but limited by contextual features. SPGs are not supposed to be either homogeneously distributed among Italian citizens or equally viable within any context.

3. Italian Solidarity Purchase Groups in times of crisis: a three-step analysis

Italy has been experiencing a period of macroeconomic decline, a turbulent political scenario and a clear worsening of socio-economic conditions since 2008. Austerity measures have progressively fed social discontent, anti-politics and anti-European feelings. Citizens' dissatisfaction started off organized opposition groups, both vigorous and echoed by the media, mainly through the rising anti-austerity movement (Della Porta, Andretta 2013) and the Five Star Movement (Biorcio, Natale 2013).

At national level we first observed some basic trends of the spread of SPGs through the analysis of the database on the website [retegas.org](http://www.retegas.org) (the most important national SPGs network). Although incomplete and only partially updated,² the database allowed to show that Italian SPGs have increased almost linearly since 1999 and have further grown in the last 7 years (Figure 1). Currently they are nearly 1000, but there could be an estimated 2000 groups including the non-registered ones (Forno, Grasseni, Signori 2013).

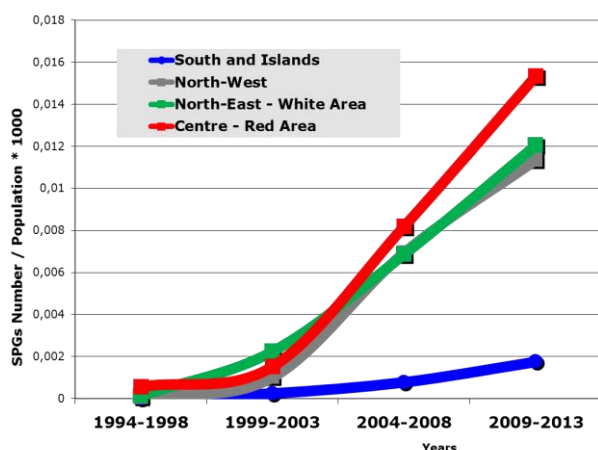
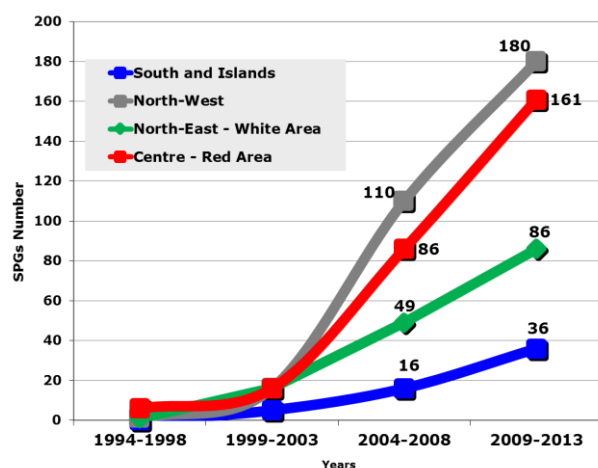
Figure 1. Number of SPGs registered on www.retegas.org from 1999 to 2014 (Source: www.retegas.org)



The explorative analysis on the database also allows to observe that this robust growth has been regionally unbalanced. Currently, except for the small Valle d'Aosta, Lombardy and Tuscany seem to be the leading regions (the former having the highest number of SPGs among Italian regions, and the latter the highest rate of SPGs/population), while SPGs are much less widespread in Southern regions.

² About 47% of registered SPGs did not indicate the establishment year on the database.

Figure 2. Macro-area growth of SPGs number and SPGs rate (SPGs number / population) in Italy from 1994 to 2013 (n=463) (Source: www.retegas.org)



Δ SPGs	South and Islands	North-West	North-East - White Area	Centre - Red Area	Italy
2003-2008	+220,0%	+587,5%	+206,3%	+437,5%	+417,9%
2008-2013	+125,0%	+63,6%	+75,5%	+87,2%	+80,7%

SPGs have grown significantly in all the regions since 2004 and further in the years of crisis (2009-2013). In those years, SPGs rate (SPGs/population) increased more in southern Italian regions (Δ 2013-2008 = +125,0%) and central 'red area' regions

(+87,2%) than in northwestern (+63,6%) and northeastern 'white' regions (+75,5%). Nevertheless Southern Italy still has a significant gap.

Pearson measures of binary correlations between the rate of SPGs by region (dependent variable) on the one side, the percentage of graduated citizens, the rate of associations and the per capita GDP on the other side, and a linear regression analysis with the three independent variables in the model revealed that only the per capita GDP is significantly (at .001 level) correlated to the SPGs rate by region, explaining more than 70% of the variance ($R^2 = .722$) (see Appendix for details). Although this result could support post-materialist hypothesis, this explorative analysis let rather unsatisfied. Following this rough model, further analysis showed that social capital seems to intervene between economic well-being and alternative consumption. Moreover, the correlations between SPGs rate and capita GDP cannot explain why SPGs continue to grow even in times of hard economic crisis. This apparent contradiction suggests that such correlation hides more complicate mechanisms of integration of different factors.

To better grasp the impact of the crisis on SPGs, we conducted an in-depth analysis on Tuscany. The case of Tuscan SPGs seems to be interesting. Tuscany has the highest rate of SPGs in Italy (with the exception of Valle d'Aosta) and is the leading region of 'red area' SPGs (Figure 3). Moreover, Tuscany has a strong agricultural tradition, especially attentive to direct selling to consumers (Bellini, Lipizzi 2013, 118-120, table 4.8). Here small agriculture enterprises have collapsed since 2000 on (Regione Toscana 2012) and 2008 economic crisis has had a clearly negative impact on citizens, affecting mostly young people and coastal areas (Irpel, Unioncamere 2012). Tuscany has a strong participative tradition, generally conveyed by the so-called "red sub-culture," which supports citizens involvement in social movements and non-conventional forms of participation (Della Porta, Andretta 2002; Floridia 2010; Andretta 2015).

According to the available data on *retegas.org*, Tuscan SPGs began to grow significantly after 2003, and continued to increase during the years of crisis (+88% from 2009 to 2013, see Table 1) reaching a number of 125 officially registered groups so far. This growth has not been assisted by any institutional support at regional level, although the Tuscan regional administration has showed an interest in SPGs (Arsia 2010).

In Tuscany we conducted both a quantitative/qualitative survey and a participation observation. The quantitative survey and more in-depth interviews have been conducted first by email and by telephone, and then face-to-face from June 2014 to February 2015. In September 2014 we also conducted a focus group in which both SPGs members and local producers have been involved. Our population was composed of all the Tuscan SPGs registered on *retegas.org* (125): part of them turned out to be inactive

and part were unreachable (about 20 in all). All the SPGs were invited to participate. Out of the mapped SPGs, we could survey 37 (about 30/35% of Tuscan SPGs population), without adopting any representativeness criteria. Face-to-face interviews and the focus group involved 14 key informants on our topic: 10 SPGs coordinators (only 2 included in the already surveyed 37), 3 small agricultural SPGs producers/providers, 1 delegate of the biggest farmers union in Tuscany (Coldiretti).³

Figure 3. Rate of SPGs per period of foundation in the 'red area' (n=161) (Source: www.retegas.org)

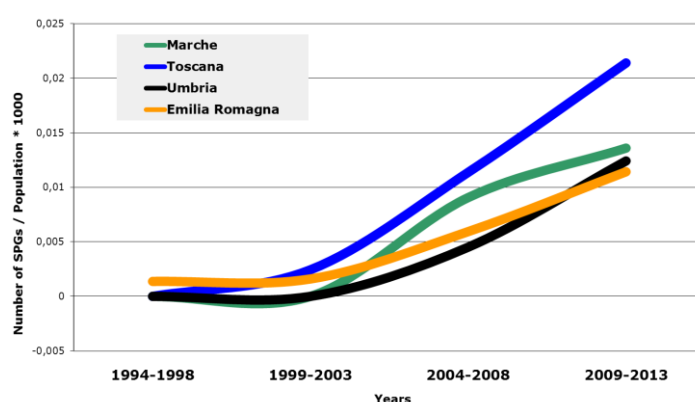


Table 1. Tuscan SPGs per establishment year (Source: www.retegas.org)

<i>Establishment Year</i>	<i>Number of SPGs</i>
1994-1998	0
1999-2003	9
2004-2008	42
2009-2013	79
Not available	46
Total	125

Participant observation has been conducted by Riccardo Guidi in Florence from September 2014 onward. The observed contexts have been two: a SPG in a semi-central area of the city, and the Florentine inter-SPGs group. As usual for this method

³ Details on the interviewed people are in Appendix.

(Balsinger, Lambelet 2014), observation has implied the elaboration of field notes of direct participation to meetings, activities and of face-to-face and email discussions.⁴

4. Tuscan SPGs in times of crisis

4.1 Diffusion, main features and motivations of Tuscan SPGs

The average size of a Tuscan SPG is about 32 members (calculated by considering both families and individuals), mostly coming from a middle-class background (teachers, employees, specialized workers, small farm owners, etc.): 21 (57%) have only middle-class members; 9 (24%) have upper middle-class associates, and only the members of 6 groups (16%) come also from a lower middle-class status, while 1 SPG did not provide information on this. Those data seem to confirm that, if social class strongly affects the likelihood of practicing political consumerism (Ferrer-Fons, Fraile 2014), the profile of SPGs members “locates them clearly among the well-educated Italian lower middle classes, mainly employed in poorly paid but secure jobs in education or in the public service sector” (Grasseni 2014: 186), and potentially affected by the economic crisis and the austerity policies cutting public expenditure.

About 28% (10 out of 35) of them report that ‘the majority’ of their members actively participated in politics before getting involved in SPGs activities, while the same percentage declare that ‘about half’ of the members did so. They are ‘only a minority’ in 14 (40%) of them, and ‘nobody’ in just 1 (in two cases we did not get the relative information). The fact that most SPGs members have experienced some forms of political participation in the past (in civil society organizations, social movements, and volunteer work) shows how the diffusion of SPGs is associated with the strength of local associational life.

When asked about the reasons that motivated individuals to get involved in SPGs activities, the coordinators made reference to four types: ethical-political (to change the world through local practices); environmental (to create a better relationship between men and nature); “localist” (to help local producers); and “private” (to improve their health by eating high-quality food). “Reasons are always the same—one of them told us—and it’s not a matter of saving money, but the will to share with others and to change the world through local and individual practices, against market competition and for a solidarity economy” (Interview 18). Another reported that “at the beginning

⁴ Details on the participant observation sessions are in Appendix.

there was a strong ethical and ecological motivation, the choice of a different development model” (Interview 22), while the coordinator of the SPG n.3 listed “food quality, a better health, and helping the local economy” (Interview 3). Alternatively, somebody underlined that “for most people, in the beginning, the intent is to limit the costs of getting good food, while we work for a broader environmental awareness” (Interview 37). It is interesting to notice that to participate in an SPG can slowly transform individual motivations:

My own path—said one activist during a focus group—has been a life experience. I started to participate in an SPG because I was in search of genuine food, then I realized what kind of work there is in a supply chain and how important is to make good choices when buying foods (where the products come from; how they are made, who and in what conditions makes them). Now, after a fifteen-year experience, I’m much more aware that it’s important to support eco-sustainable practices. (Focus Group, September 16, 2014).

To those changing and often intertwined motivations somebody added the need to create a “community,” a solidarity group with a sense of belonging: “It is important to stress that these initiatives often hide the need to build a ‘small community’” (Interview 6), a point underlined also by the coordinator of the SPG of Barga (Lucca) who pointed out that “over time, motivations changed: now they’re much more ‘human’ than ‘technical,’ and have much more to do with the excellent human relations that we’ve built...” (Interview 14).

About 60% of SPGs answering this question (18 out of 31), declared that the volume of purchases increased in the last years, 25% (8) that it remained the same, and the remaining (5) that it decreased. The majority of the SPGs that we interviewed reported a “strong and open” relationship with local producers/providers, some of which are also invited to participate in SPGs meetings, and seem to share SPGs principles. This sound relationship between producers and SPGs members suggests to interpret SPG activism as a convincing “co-production” experiment (Grasseni 2014).

Some group coordinators are more guarded—“It became a business! Many producers approach us. I don’t believe that all of them are concerned with ethical questions, since also bigger producers contact us. This is a point we should reflect upon” (Interview 23)—but participant observation and our interviews with small organic producers confirm that an ethical motivation is at the center of their considerations. Small organic farmers have often been invited to join the meetings of the observed SPGs and Inter-SPGs and to provide some background information on their activities (January 17, 2015: 2 producers; January 19, 2015: 2 producers; December 15, 2014: 1 producer;

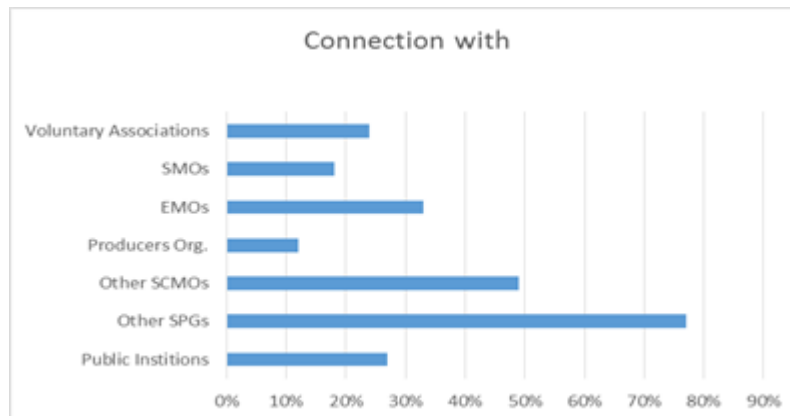
November 17, 2014: 1 producer). In their presentations they clearly included their own business ideas and activities in the context of political consumerism, and they asserted their own past and present activism in this field. In our Focus Group, the representative of a small producers network said:

All the farmers in our network are moved by ethical reasons, they are ethical producers, sometimes even rigid in their ethics, because many believe that this is the way towards a more sustainable future. Their way of thinking is more ethical than linked to economic considerations. ... Farmers believe in this, they think that they have to invest a lot of euros for labeling and controls of products, and if they make a mistake they can have a lot of problems. They continue to do this because they believe that it's fair, right. (Focus Group, September 16, 2014).

Another aspect that we wanted to investigate is the extent to which SPGs interact with other associations and organizations. If Forno and Graziano (2014) are right when they claim that SPGs are part of a "Sustainable Community Movement" (SCM), we should notice that they are embedded in networks of relationships with other SPGs and other SCMOs, such as fair trade organizations, "no-sweat" groups, Slow Food groups, farmers communities for an alternative and sustainable agriculture, etc. Besides, social movements do not operate in isolation, and if such networks exist, we should also find interactions with other social groups to ally with (della Porta, Diani 2006). One of the closest actors is undoubtedly the Environmental Movement (EM), which shares many principles of SCMOs in general, and of SPGs in particular. But it is important to find out if SPGs are also connected with other civil society organizations and SMOs which can help them to seize some political opportunities (Kriesi et al. 1995) such as public funds or logistic solutions (e.g. meeting spaces, or similar). Finally, if SCMOs need to be analyzed by paying attention to the interaction between market, politics and culture (Renting, Schermer, Rossi 2012; Hassanein 2003), consequently it is important to notice to what extent SPGs build durable relations with associated market operators in order to build a Sustainable Community also in the market system.

As far as relationships with other SPGs are concerned, 26 out of 34 groups which answered this question confirmed their participation in formal or informal SPGs networks, and 12 of them in national ones, while 16 out of 33 reported relations with other SCMOs, 11 with Environmental Movement Organizations (EMOs), and 6 with other SMOs; finally, 8 with voluntary associations (including welfare and cultural associations), and 4 with farmers organizations. With regard to their connections with political institutions, 9 out of 27 declared to have some relationships with local public administrations (see percentages in Figure 4).

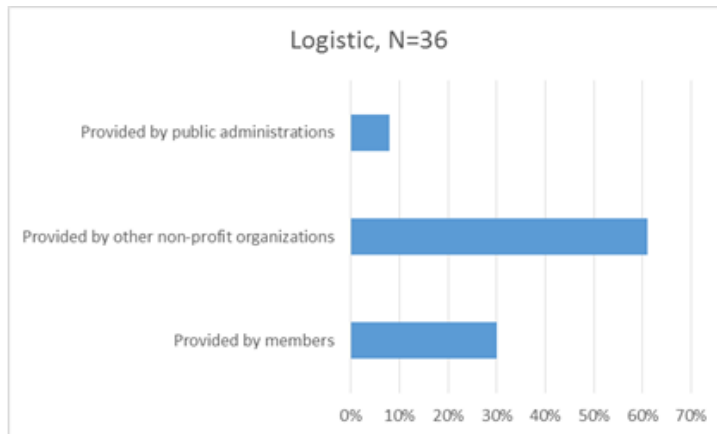
Figure 4. Tuscan SPGs relations with other social and political organizations.



As we have just noticed, many of the Tuscan SPGs surveyed have some kind of relation with a plurality of collective actors, and some of those relations allow groups to mobilize resources for their activities. One indicator of this dynamic is the use of spaces for the distribution of products and, above all, group meetings: with regard to this issue, 22 out of 36 admitted to use spaces provided by non-profit organizations, such as cultural or catholic associations; and only 3 use rooms provided by public administrations; the remaining 11 SPGs use members' houses or shops, or pay for a rent (see percentages in Figure 5).

As some of the data reported show, the Tuscan SPGs surveyed are not concerned only with the private consumerist style of their members, but also with their role as "communities" dedicated to change the world and the economic model of development, and to improve the environment. Not only do they interact with other organizations to spread their own principles and advertise activities, but they also get involved in public initiatives such as referendums, public conferences, demonstrations, etc. with their partners: 27 out of 32 groups confirmed their participation in such activities; some of them on issues related to "critical consumerism" (14 out of 26 answering) and some other on more general ecological and social matters (12). All those data confirm that SPGs can be considered a particular kind of social movement organizations

Figure 5. Tuscan SPGs logistic provision



4.2 Testing the impact of the crisis on Tuscan SPGs

According to the people interviewed, the context of the economic crisis and austerity has significantly influenced Tuscan SPGs. Less than 1 SPG in 3 has not been affected by the crisis, whereas 64,9% SPGs (corresponding to 24 groups) have noticed some changes (Figure 6). Some of the people interviewed observed only weak effects of crisis on their own SPG, but most of them noticed some relevant changes.

Three different direct effects of the crisis seem to exist. First, in some SPGs the crisis has affected members' consumption attitudes. They seem to have retrenched their own purchases budget, to have made their purchases more focused, and to have increased their attention to prices. As one participant in our focus group summarized

consumption through SPGs changed as families consumption changed in general. Those who can afford it consume in the same way, those who are in economic difficulty pay more attention to quantities by reducing waste (Focus Group).

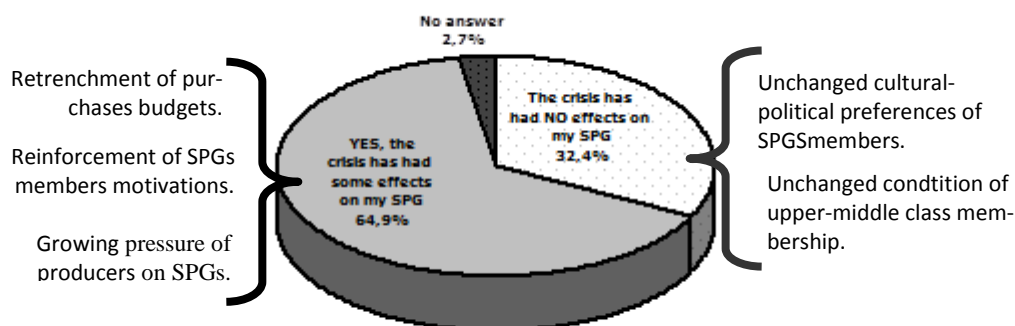
Second, in some SPGs the crisis seems to have strengthened the motivations of some members. They seem to have further developed their own critical attitudes towards the economic system and to have counted more on the SPG as a good way to react (see 3.3).

Third, some SPGs have observed a different attitude in producers. They seem to have significantly developed a stronger interest in SPGs as a favorable sales channel. It

has meant that some SPGs have observed a growing pressure of farmers who put themselves up as providers (see 3.4). As a coordinator stated,

Now providers and producers have a strong desire to approach SPGs for economic reasons. We receive tens of emails each month by providers and farmers who send speculative applications to our group. Sometimes it's positive: we actually have found some providers this way. But sometimes it's not... providers are too aggressive. (Interview 17)

Figure 6. Direct effects of crisis on SPGs (n=37)



Beyond a direct investigation, we also can assess the impact of the crisis by looking at the changes in the characteristics of the surveyed SPGs in time of crisis: membership, members' social background, members' motivating forces and SPGs relations with other collective actors. We will do so by presenting the transformations occurred in the last years, and by differentiating SPGs founded before or in 2008 (pre-crisis) from those founded after (during the crisis).

4.3 Members and motivations

If the average size of surveyed groups is about 32 members, 22 groups (about 60%) declared that members have increased in the last years, 10 (about 27%) that their number has remained the same, while only in 5 cases membership has decreased. If we look at Figure 7, we see that members have increased more in those SPGs founded after 2008 (during the crisis).

The social composition of members varies according to the period of foundation as well: SPGs founded during the crisis period reported more lower middle-class and mixed-class members than the ones established before (see Figure 8). In 6 of our cases, a change in favor of lower-class members is also reported.

Most SPGs interviewed (56,8%, corresponding to 21 SPGs) did not experience any relevant change in members' motivating forces in the last 3-4 years. In this cluster, self-oriented and pragmatic inducements coexist with reasons related to local alter-consumerism (Forno, Graziano 2014). In several SPGs there is also an in-between influence which makes people turn to community experience. Interviewees describe persistent motivating forces which include both kinds of reason very often. One is hardly detachable from the other. Thus, this cluster of Tuscan SPGs generally seems to be characterized by *hybrid motives*. A strong economic force—or else to pay less to purchase goods—is absent. Nevertheless, some of the people interviewed in this cluster say that purchasing good-quality organic local products at reasonable prices is a typical motivation of SPGs members (Figure 9).

However, a robust minority (43,2%, corresponding to 16 SPGs) experienced some transformation in members' motivating forces in the last 3-4 years. Part of our sample groups experienced discouragement among affiliates, and a consequent reduction in the number of members. In other SPGs an increased attention is being paid to the possibility to buy good-quality food at lower prices than in supermarkets, while some SPGs pointed out how members' motivating forces shifted from initial ethical reasons to current preponderant health-based ones. 2008 Crisis also seems to have strengthened critical and community-based dynamics in some SPGs (see Figure 10). According to some coordinators interviewed, perhaps paradoxically, the crisis might have a positive effect: "People are much more alert to wasteful spending. This increases their awareness of what a good quality/price ratio is" (Interview 3); "People are more cognizant of the importance of getting collectively organized, of building territorial networks, of reinforcing their food sovereignty..." (Interview 6); "People are much more critical now, they observe more, they are much more willing to learn about the entire production cycle..." (interview 14); "The crisis has a positive effect on the SPGs movement, because now it's clear that capitalism is a bankrupt system, and people are much more in need of solidarity in relationships, as the increase of families involved in our activities testifies..." (Interview 27). Perhaps the most meaningful piece of interview is the following:

The crisis had a huge effect on our activities. We insist much more in promoting cultural changes now ... , we need to increase our attention to producers, we're trying to guarantee them our constant commitment, and to help farm businesses become more economically sustainable (with pre-financing agreements, prepaid vouchers)... The awareness that our consumerist practices are 'right', even if improvable, that a solidarity economy embedded in human relations of trust and collaboration is a value on which is

worth to invest, and that our choices are important and affect the world in which we live is growing a lot... (Interview 10)

Figure 7. Membership variations by period of foundation (n=37)

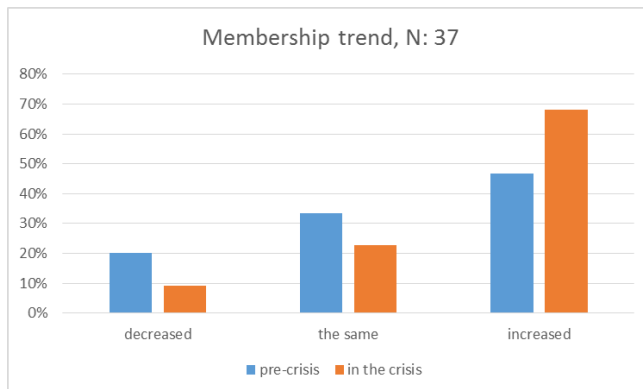


Figure 8. SPGs foundation period and social composition of membership (n=37)

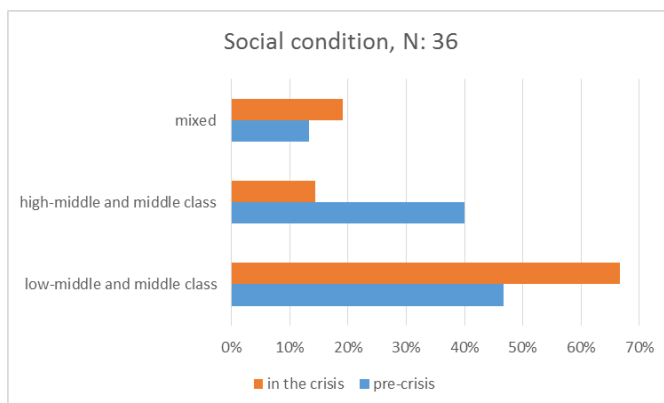
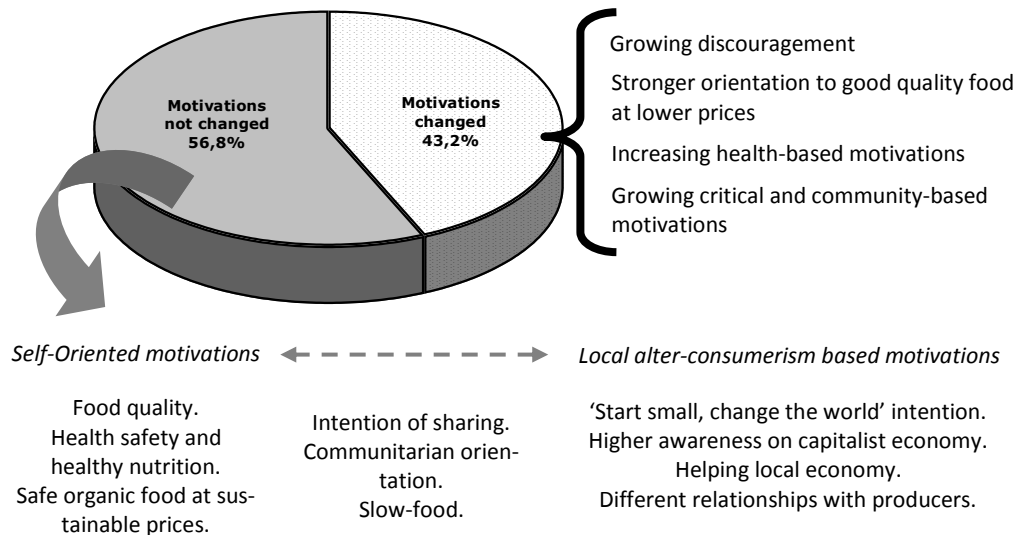


Figure 9. Changes in SPGs members motivating forces in the last 3-4 years (n=37)

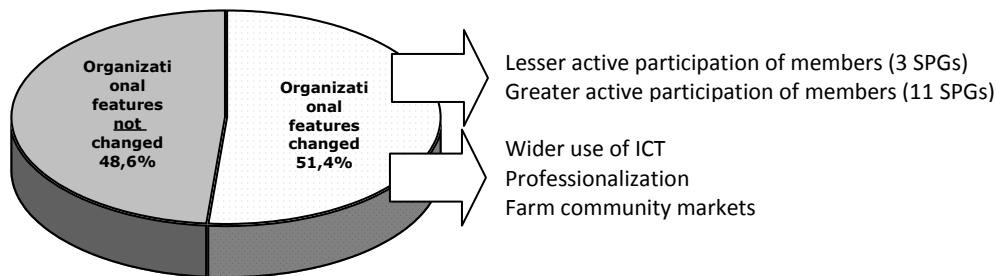


4.4 Organizational and relational changes in collective purchase

Almost half of the SPGs interviewed (48,6%, corresponding to 18 SPGs) did not change significantly their own organizational processes of collective purchase in the last 3-4 years. In some cases organizational responsibilities have continued to be diffusely shared among the members, and in other cases they have continued to be held by a small minority. As participant observation in the Florentine SPG clearly showed, critical collective purchase is highly ritual and routinized. Every week products are usually delivered to a convenient drop-off location and such mode always involves the same people, places, and practices. Each product is constantly associated to the same SPG member who acts as contact person for both other members and the producer.

The majority of SPGs interviewed (51,4%, corresponding to 19 SPGs) has experienced some changes in the organization of collective purchase in the last 3-4 years. According to our data (see Figure 10) most groups in this cluster have gone towards a larger sharing of organizational responsibilities, whereas some SPGs have experienced the contrary.

Figure 10. Changes in organizational features of collective purchase in the last 3-4 years (n=37)



Three further trends seem to exist among the SPGs that have innovated their own collective purchase strategies in the last years. *First*, the growing use of ICT is increasingly helping SPGs members to save time and SPGs producers to better keep in touch with critical consumers. From different and complementary perspectives, an SPG coordinator and the founder of a small farmers network clarified this trend.

When I joined the SPG in 2008 I wondered how we could actually manage the logistics. In my opinion this was the real Achilles' heel. The founding members of the SPG worked with a simple Excel file. I was dumbstruck: it's so easy to make a mess with an Excel file, and using it can take a lot of time. So we changed. First, we began to work using shared Google documents. Then our activities have grown and logistics has become more difficult... It's easy to make mistakes, and sometimes people say "I have no time!"... Our SPG has 25 producers right now, and we have many deliveries each week. So I'm thinking about improving our Google Drive-based logistics. We must improve our systems and smartphones, and low-cost ICT can help us (Interview 46)

Our business is a sort of locally-based e-commerce, that is... we're all in the Florence area, and sell to Florentine critical consumers through e-commerce like a small store. It's our strength... We applied the potentialities of the Web to the pattern of short supply chain. So we both reduce our costs and offer people a local service. (...) This way we can also reach critical consumers who aren't in an SPG because they haven't enough time to dedicate to collective purchase (Interview 43)

Second, some SPGs have chosen to transform collective purchase into something more professional through the partnership with non-profit organizations that facilitate the supply and the delivery of products. At the moment this trend involves a small minority of Tuscan SPGs but it could spread along with the rising debate about the so-called 'Piccola Distribuzione Organizzata' (PDO) (small organized distribution) within

Italian SPGs networks. However, as an SPG member told us, and participant observation during an InterSPG meeting on January 17, 2015 confirmed, Florentine SPGs generally seem to dislike this development.

In my opinion, SPGs principles shouldn't change but organizational practices should. In 'Piccola Distribuzione Organizzata' a group of SPGs has storage space, packers, a day dedicated to the delivery for all the producers or a home delivery managed by a driver... This development costs. We could give ourselves a structure and give some people a job. In some PDO experiences an Associazione di Promozione Sociale (Social Promotion Association) has been created and costs have been covered through a 2-3-4% markup on the prices. But I know... all this sounds unpopular in the Tuscan SPGs environment. There's a tough resistance. In Tuscany we are quite different from other regional contexts such as the northern ones. Here the mere word "structuration" bothers many people. (Interview 46)

Third, Tuscan SPGs are increasingly supporting collective purchase through community farm markets. Already widespread before 2008 (Arsia, 2008), they have grown significantly in the last years. In the Florentine area, a network of 9 community farm markets has been progressively established (after the pioneer experience of 'Fierucola' since 1984). They are self-managed by SPGs, small producers, and grassroots associations. Here the purchase and sale of local fair products are public and are part of larger educational and community-building events.

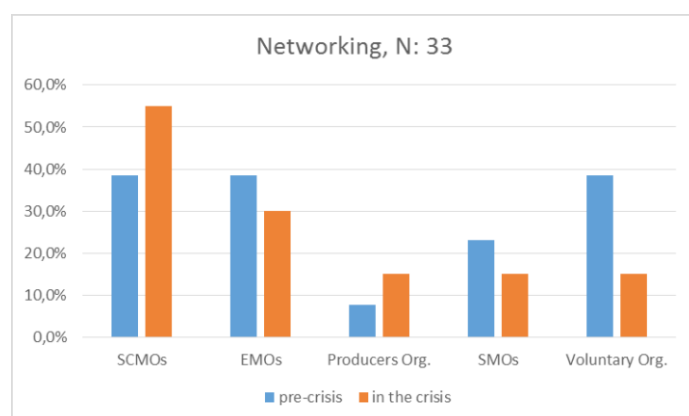
They are promoted by SPGs and they aim at giving both more value to producers linked to a solidarity economy model, and more opportunities to people to help them approach the world of critical consumerism. We have to give all the people the chance to safely and critically eat. In community farm markets we go beyond the selling phase... there are presentations of products, training on farming methods... To organize them is not easy because of bureaucracy and costs. (Interview 41)

The distinction between the two periods of foundation of SPGs (pre-crisis and during the crisis) also allows to assess in a preliminary way if the new socio-economic context is producing changes in the way SPGs network with each other and with external collective actors.

Figure 11 shows that SPGs founded in times of crisis are networking more with other SCMOs and with producers organizations, and draws attention to the fact that they are more active in building local sustainable (both economically and ecologically speaking) communities—possibly food communities (Hassanein 2003)—than other broader and more political relationships. On the other hand pre-crisis SPGs are more connected

with external organizations such as Environmental Movement Organizations, other SMOs, charities, and philanthropic associations. This reflects the fact that the SPGs founded in times of crisis attract less people with a previous participative experience than pre-crisis groups do: in 55% of the former against 27% of the latter only a minority has such experience.

Figure 11. SPGs networking by period of foundation.



However, those different patterns of networking do not mean that the groups founded during the crisis are less publicly active, as 17 of them report involvement in public activities against 10 of pre-crisis SPGs; it is rather the focus of the public activities that changes, more oriented to production/consumption and a bit less concerned with broader environmental issues.

InterSPG is center-staged in Florentine SPGs activities. As participant observation has shown, Florentine InterSPG works through bi-monthly assemblies that usually involve 30-40 SPGs members without any power of attorney of their own SPG. The assemblies help to coordinate 'exceptional' collective purchases (such as oranges from Sicily), to design and support peculiar initiatives and campaigns, to manage communication instruments (public website, mailing list). Florentine InterSPG occasionally has some specific working groups. One of the most active in late 2014 / early 2015 was the Organizing Committee of the movie festival "Tutti nello stesso piatto" (All in the same plate) held in the biggest and oldest cinema in Florence in March 2015. The Festival, which gathered about 1,200 spectators, has been totally self-funded and exclusively based on volunteer work. The organizational activities were complex and included the program design (movies and presentations), public communication campaign, search for active

support among Florentine SPGs, and fundraising. Participant observation has clearly showed how easily the Committee has activated a network composed by SPGs, alter-consumerism SCMOs, grassroots associations, solidarity economy producers and the cinema.

If the strengthening of the relations between SPGs founded during the crisis, SCMOs, and producers organizations is confirmed at a larger scale and with a more rigorous empirical analysis, it may emphasize the formation of a community movement based on good, safe and cheap food, where both the notions of “co-production” (Grasseni 2014) and “food democracy” (Hassanein 2003) may become even more central. It is, then, worth analyzing in detail the changes in SPGs relationships with individual producers.

Actually, more than 2 interviewed SPGs out of 3 (70,3%, corresponding to 26 SPGs) have changed something in their own relationship with local producers/providers in the last years. Changes mainly regard the number of producers involved by SPGs and the intensity of relationships between SPGs and producers.

Some SPGs have increased the number of producers or have only substituted some producers with other ones (turn-over). The increasing number of small producers involved by SPGs clearly matches the rising difficulties of small farmers within the context of conventional trade. The importance of SPGs for the existence of small farmers and peasant agriculture in Tuscany is clarified well by three different interviewed people.

When a small farmer goes to an intermediary, the latter has the upper hand. Large retailers inform her about how much product they need and the price. She has to transfer them a significant part of potential income and suffer for the more and more frequent delayed payments too. Moreover, large retailers always can tell her ‘bye, I’ve found another provider.’ In agriculture you can’t even have a rapid reaction because times of conversion are slow... The only way is direct selling! (Interview 38)

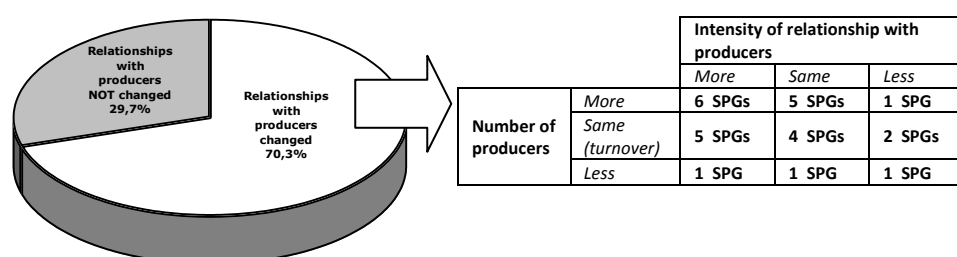
I had a problem: I don’t have the production quantity requested by large retailers. So I opted to have a direct relationships with final consumers and I began to contact some SPGs. My plots are close to the city and I began with the 2 SPGs that are closer to my plots. The activity has worked out well. (...) I’ve many contacts with other small farmers because we all studied Agricultural Sciences at University of Florence. They’ve had my same problem about commercialization and, in addition, many of them have plots that are far from the city. So I’ve begun to include also their products in my proposals to SPGs. We’ve progressively established a network of small farmers. The system has worked out well and has grown, so I decided to make this business official and I founded Agrimé. (...) For all of us the most important positive aspect of this system is predictabil-

ity: since we work only with booked products we can minimize waste and avoid a devaluation of our products (...) For a small farmer to sell to large retailers is unrewarding, and to sell through local markets is risky because local markets risk to fail because of rain, cold or warm weather... and this isn't viable because being present in 2 local markets each week makes the farmer's work on the plot impossible. With Agrimè we make a difference. (Interview 43)

I've been farmer for 35 years. I've always believed in peasant, organic, self-certified agriculture, out of the agro-business model involving both conventional and organic agriculture. Once I survived also thanks to some work on behalf of others. Then, 10 years ago, thanks to the spread of SPGs in Florence, I started to dedicate myself to this kind of agriculture. This is a resistant and militant agriculture that goes against almost all that agriculture has become in the last 50 years. (...) Through SPGs and community farm markets there's a way to handle the situation economically. We've built direct relationships with critical consumers who are interested not only in eating healthy food but also in being responsible with the management of territory. A community has been spontaneously established in the last 10 years. (Interview 42)

Some SPGs have made their own relationships with producers stronger, by increasing their number or leaving it unchanged (Figure 12).

Figure 12. Changes in SPGS relationships with producers/providers in the last 3-4 years (n=37)



This confirms a growing attention to high-quality products and the increasing need for a sustainable and safe food community. As one SPG coordinator told us: "the number of producers has increased, but their businesses are always small and often family-run. We always ask them precise quality standards... We ask producers to apply a small price charge to allow the access to organic products to as much people as possible" (Interview 31). Another coordinator affirms that "We ask producers to be present during the drop-off. This is very important, because we need to create a strong relationship of trust between producers and our members" (Interview 15).

In the last years, Tuscan SPGs seem to have developed a stronger interest in co-production. One of the most innovative practices, in this sense, is the so-called “Participatory Guarantee” of producers. As reported by one participant, it consists of

a robust relationship of trust between consumers/co-producers and producers regarding how local products are produced. It’s concretely carried out following a calendar of ‘farm meetings’ where producers are available to get the visits of both consumers and other producers. The latter can better verify if production follows the right methods. (...) If you are in a Participatory Guarantee System you don’t need an organic official certification: relationships are more important than a stamp! Some producers opt for Participatory Guarantee System because they cannot face the costs of an official organic certification. Someone else does it for political reasons. (Interview 40)

But the current co-production scenario can be even more radical. SPGs in Florence have been involved in a massive mobilization on “Ground Common Good” since 2012. In 2012, after a protest campaign against Italian austerity politics aimed at selling State plots to private economic entities, an abandoned 170-hectare plot on the Florentine hills has been put into production by a coalition composed by employed and unemployed farmers, students from the Department of Agricultural Sciences of the University of Florence, and members of SPGs and SCMOs. According to one of the leaders, “the idea is: you find a plot, you put it into production, you create jobs, and you include the products in SPGs. It’s an already available system; it’s simple but solid.” (Interview 40)

In the very different context of Vicopisano (a rural small town near Pisa with a population of 8,000) some activists of the local SPG have designed and carried out a self-organized playroom and after-school activities for children, a vegetarian organic catering business initiative and more recently the management of a bar in the town. As one of them told us:

Once that bar cashed in 11.000€ from slot machines in a year. New managers have immediately removed them. That bar had products from large retailers, Nestlé... , now it has organic products... They’re doing a great job and the town feedback is positive. (Focus Group).

5. SPGs in Italy between resistance and resilience: some preliminary conclusions

The analysis we have conducted about SPGs in times of crisis and austerity has been explorative and the results should be considered only provisional. More robust data and analyses are necessary to shed light on if and how the economic crisis and austerity policies have affected SPGs practices. Further investigations will also help to verify if SPGs are an effective form of alternative resilience, for whom and how. In spite of that, our analysis may give some contributions to further investigations on these topics.

At the national level, although the cross-regional SPGs distribution is strongly related with the regional GDP, the hypothesis 'less economic resources less SPGs' does not seem confirmed: on the one hand SPGs distribution is also related with regional civic traditions, on the other hand the significant growth of Italian SPGs in each macro-area in times of recession and austerity shows that the simple amount of available economic resources cannot *per se* drive a satisfying understanding of SPGs evolution. Hypotheses based on cultural and political processes seem to be more promising. They may point to the resilience capacity of those groups. Post-materialist values resulting from economic well-being might have produced organized practices of political consumerism, but once it gets organized - this is our tentative argument - not only does it resist to external shocks but also it transforms itself and adapts to fit the new conditions (of crisis), that is, it becomes 'resilient.' If the concept of resilience in sociology has been so far mainly used to explain how small communities return to the preceding equilibrium after a shock event, we argue that such a concept can also be usefully applied to SPGs and SCMOs to understand how they may originally support economic, social and political changes at micro and meso level after an economic shock through (food) consumers/producers networking. The 'resilience hypothesis' has however to face some social cleavages: not surprisingly, the most deprived and agricultural area of Italy is at the same time the worst equipped to tackle the crisis through alternative collective forms of resilience mainly based on food networks, while in the most economically and socially equipped regions, SPGs are more able to adapt to the crisis and transform their functions accordingly.

Our explorative investigation on Tuscany shows that SPGs in the context of crisis and austerity actually are an alternative resilience opportunity. At micro level (SPGs members), they can allow people to buy high-quality, safe and healthy products at sustainable prices, can give people a chance to feel 'less powerless' and try to affect, if not the 'capitalist system', at least their local economy. Moreover, SPGs can offer their members a soft but meaningful communitarian experience through both the group dimen-

sion and the practical commitment with local producers. This hybrid motivating forces pattern—both self-oriented and ‘positive’ protest-based—seems to be appealing and appropriate to shape alternative resilience processes for the impoverished highly skilled middle class. Tuscan SPGs generally appear to have increased their membership and have involved more people from the impoverished middle class in the last 4 years.

Although our limited sample reveals significant differences between Tuscan SPGs which do not seem to be radically changed after 2009, the effects of the crisis on SPGs should not however be underestimated. The ‘cultural path dependency hypothesis’ seems only partially confirmed: a minority of Tuscan SPGs has reported to have not been influenced by the 2008 crisis. In these cases cultural-political preferences and consumption attitudes of SPGs members have resisted the shock. The majority of SPGs has instead experienced some direct changes. Beyond a predictable cyclical impact (lower purchasing budgets and growing difficulties for producers), a reaction against the economic and political system has been observed: in the context of crisis and austerity many SPGs members have reinforced their own motivating forces.

At meso level (organizations and communities) our data allow us to reject the ‘isomorphism hypothesis’. In the last years Tuscan SPGs have broadened and intensified their own connection with local producers. SPGs organizational strategies seem to have deepened the building of ‘food local communities’ at the expense of a more broader networking. This could confirm the potential of SPGs as an alternative form of collective eco-sustainable resilience in times of crisis, where co-production becomes a possible, at least to their view, way out. Co-production not only does imply that consumers keep well in mind the ‘materialist’ needs of the producers, but also that the latter include the former in the production decision-making, by creating new or re-vitalizing old (food) communities. In the first place, it seems that the economic crisis stimulated more intense relations between farmers and consumers. In the second place, our research suggests that the crisis made more evident the complicated connection between typically post-materialist concerns, such as quality of life and attention to the environment, and people’s material needs.

We suggest future research on these and other related topics to better explore the role of the organization in the diffusion and re-production of alternative consumerist values, and in the creation and revitalization of communities sharing the same consumption and production values. This would mean to unpack the mechanism of resilience in sub-mechanisms at individual, organization and community level.

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Appendix

Regional distribution of SPGs, Associations and Committees, graduation rate and per capita GDP

Region	Population (2013) (Istat)	SPGs (2014) (Re- tegas.org)	Associations + Committees (2012) (Istat)	SPGs / Pop. (2014)	(Ass. + Comm.) / Pop. (2014)	Graduated Citizens / Pop. (2013) (Istat)	Per capita GDP (in €) (2012) (Istat)
Liguria	1.565.127	33	7.296	0,0021%	0,47%	13,1%	27.308
Lombardia	9.794.525	250	35.378	0,0026%	0,36%	11,5%	33.066
Piemonte	4.374.052	103	20.202	0,0024%	0,46%	10,4%	27.942
Valle d'Aosta	127.844	5	958	0,0039%	0,75%	10,3%	34.465
Friuli V.G.	1.221.860	15	8.542	0,0012%	0,70%	11,1%	29.106
Trentino A.A.	1.039.934	21	8.973	0,0020%	0,86%	9,9%	30.186
Veneto	4.881.756	86	23.241	0,0018%	0,48%	10,0%	29.531
Emilia Romagna	4.377.487	87	19.822	0,0020%	0,45%	11,8%	31.538
Marche	1.545.155	32	8.598	0,0021%	0,56%	11,5%	25.601
Toscana	3.692.828	125	19.205	0,0034%	0,52%	11,3%	28.100
Umbria	886.239	12	4.940	0,0014%	0,56%	13,0%	23.316
Lazio	5.557.276	91	15.468	0,0016%	0,28%	14,2%	29.195
Abruzzo	1.312.507	14	5.255	0,0011%	0,40%	11,3%	22.322
Basilicata	576.194	4	2.448	0,0007%	0,42%	9,7%	17.964
Calabria	1.958.238	11	5.699	0,0006%	0,29%	8,9%	16.575
Campania	5.769.750	27	9.170	0,0005%	0,16%	9,1%	16.369
Molise	313.341	3	1.382	0,0010%	0,44%	10,7%	20.034
Puglia	4.050.803	28	10.614	0,0007%	0,26%	8,4%	17.208
Sardegna	1.640.379	11	7.240	0,0007%	0,44%	9,5%	19.722
Sicilia	4.999.932	29	13.776	0,0006%	0,28%	8,5%	16.826

Linear Regression with SPGs regional rate (SPGs/Pop.) as dependent variable (N=20)

	Standardized Beta	Sig.
Graduated Citizens / Pop.	-.090	.587
(Ass. + Comm.) / Pop.	.043	.805
Per capita GDP	.868	.001
R Square	.722	

Sessions of participant observation

Florentine SPGs meetings: 15-09-2014, 06-10-2014, 27-10-2014, 17-11-2014, 15-12-2014, 09-03-2015
Florentine SPG's meetings for good delivery: 29-09-2014, 01-10-2014, 06-10-2014, 08-10-2014, 22-10-2014, 29-10-2014, 03-11-2014, 05-11-2014, 10-11-2014, 12-11-2014, 17-11-2014, 26-11-2014, 01-12-2014, 02-12-2015, 15-12-2014, 17-12-2014, 07-01-2015, 12-01-2015, 14-01-2015, 21-01-2015, 26-01-2015, 16-02-2015, 04-03-2015, 19-03-2015, 31-03-2015
Florentine community farm market: 11-10-2014
'Tutti nello stesso piatto - Toscana' InterSPG Organizational Committee meetings: 03-11-2014, 15-12-2014, 26-01-2015, 23-02-2015, 27-02-2015
Florentine interSPG assemblies: 15-11-2014, 17-01-2015
Florentine interSPG good delivery: 22-12-2014
SPG's mailing list from 16/09/2014 onwards: 396 messages
'Tutti nello stesso piatto - Toscana' mailing list from 04-11-2014 onwards: 283 messages

Interviews/Questionnaires to Tuscan SPGs (June 16th / November 5th 2014)

1) Anonimo	20) SPG La Montagna GASata - Firenze
2) SPG Station - S.Miniato (Pisa)	21) SPG Valdichiana Senese - Siena
3) SPG Pietrasanta (Lucca)	22) SPG Etica o Etichetta - Arezzo
4) SPG Chicco di grano – Pistoia	23) SPG Calenzano - Firenze
5) SPG GASancat – Firenze	24) SPG Casale Marittimo - Pisa
6) SPG Barga (Lucca)	25) SPG Collesalveti - Livorno
7) Anonimo	26) SPG Ecomondo - Livorno
8) SPG Amici della terra Versilia (Lucca)	27) SPG GASello - Reggello (Firenze)
9) SPG Massa	28) SPG GASalpasiena - Siena
10) SPG GASsedotti – Firenze	29) SPG GrrAS - Grosseto
11) SPG Carrara	30) SPG SangerGAS - Firenze
12) SPG Seravezza (Lucca)	31) SPG Fresco in Città - Livorno
13) SPG Viareggio (Lucca)	32) SPG Equipe GAS - Firenze
14) SPG Mezzaluna – Pisa	33) SPG Ortica - Empoli
15) SPG Felice – Pistoia	34) SPG Londa - Firenze
16) SPG Casciana Terme – Pisa	35) SPG Ponsacco (Pisa)
17) SPG Bio c'è – Firenze	36) SPG Millepiedi - Cerreto Guidi (Firenze)
18) SPG Reggello – Firenze	37) SPG Carmignano - Prato
19) SPG Allegri – Firenze	

Further Interviews

- 38) S.Q. - Coldiretti Tuscan delegate, "Campagna Amica" Project
39) P.C. - EquipeGAS, Florentine InterSPG, 'Tutti nello stesso piatto - Toscana' Committee
40) R.C. - GASpaccio, Florentine InterSPG, Florentine Participatory Guarantee, 'Tutti nello stesso piatto -

Toscana' Committee

41) G.O. - GASpaccio, 'Tutti nello stesso piatto - Toscana' Committee, Florentine Participatory Guarantee

42) G.P. - SPG producer, 'Genuino Clandestino' activist

43) G.G. - SPG producer, Agrimè.it founder

44) S.A. - GAS Sesto Fiorentino, 'Tutti nello stesso piatto - Toscana' Committee

45) P.R. - GASsedotti, 'Tutti nello stesso piatto - Toscana' Committee

46) M.L. - GAS Bio c'è, 'Tutti nello stesso piatto - Toscana' Committee

47) Agesci Firenze - Zona Nord Ovest

Focus Group (Pisa, September 16th, 2014)

Participants: Massimiliano Andretta (UNIFI); Riccardo Guidi (UNIFI); SPG Aulla (Massa-Carrara); SPG Vicopisano (Pisa); Legambiente activist and Eco-Producer in Val di Cornia (Livorno).

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Massimiliano Andretta is Assistant Professor at the Department of Political Sciences of the University of Pisa, where he teaches Political Science and Political Communication. His research interests are mainly on social movement and political participation studies. He has been involved in several national and international research project and he is currently collaborating in a project on Anti-austerity protest in Europe at the Schuman Centre, European University Institute. Among his recent publications, we mention "Power and arguments in global justice movement settings", in D. della Porta e D. Rucht (eds), *Meeting Democracy*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013; (with Donatella della Porta) "Dynamics of Individual Participation", in *Journal of Civil Society*, 10:4, 2014, and "Il Movimento 5 Stelle in Toscana: un movimento post-subculturale?", in Roberto Biorcio (ed.), *Gli attivisti del Movimento a 5 Stelle: dal web al territorio*, Milano, Franco Angeli, 2015.